



# Beanbag DSLR Pod

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## TOOLS:

- [Needle and thread \(1\)](#)
- [Scissors \(1\)](#)
- [Sewing Machine \(recommended but optional\) \(1\)](#)



## PARTS:

- [Fabric \(1\)](#)  
*[something sturdy with a tight weave:](#)*  
*[denim or canvas, for example](#)*
- [Beanbag filler, coarse sand or small gravel \(1\)](#)

## SUMMARY

I learned the single most valuable photography tip in the late eighties from my company's staff photographer - a large beanbag makes a superb photographic "tripod." It's sturdier, lighter, simpler to use, and more versatile than most three-legged supports.

## Step 1 — Beanbag DSLR Pod



- I've made two of these BeanPods that have been used on numerous trips and have since been lost. I've decided to make a new, larger one to support everything from the point-and-shoot Canon SD400 to the 20D SLR.
- Photographers know that one of the reasons their photos are consistently superior to the snapshots taken by people like us is that the pro's use tripods. 90% of the pics taken are shot by people willing to risk the clarity of their photos to shaky hands and a swaying body.

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- Page 3 of 7

**Step 3**



- I decided to use plastic bead-filler because beans or rice will rot if the bag gets wet. I forgot to take interim pics of the whole process. Too many pins !!\$&## and broken threads to stop and shoot pics! Below are the test shots the next morning....

- In general, cut two squares of fabric about a half-inch larger than you want your finished beanbag to be. (Refer to the photos for a good starting size.) Pin the "right" sides of the fabric together and stitch around the edges leaving a gap about an inch or two wide at one side. Turn the beanbag right side out through this gap and fill the bag with your chosen filler.

- Try not to overfill or underfill the bag. Too much filler will make the bag too rigid and it won't conform properly to the camera and the surfaces you place it on. Too little filler and the bag won't give enough support to the camera, particularly when placed over a railing as shown here. You may need to experiment a bit to find the right amount of filler to use. You can hold the bag closed temporarily with a binder clip or a couple of spring clothespins.

- When the amount of filler seems right, hand-stitch the opening closed to seal the beanbag.

## Step 4



- The trick is to snuggle your camera securely into the lump of beans (or whatever you're using in their place), then press down firmly so that the instrument is comfortably seated in its rest. Once you master the system (which takes the average photographer all of two minutes), you'll discover that it's possible to make successful slow-shutter shots without employing a cable release.



## Step 5



- For shooting landscapes—when it's necessary to sacrifice shutter speed in favor of increased depth of field—haul out a beanbag, plop it firmly down on top of a fence post, stump, or rock, seat your camera securely in the bag, and squeeze of dead-sharp shots with shutter speeds as slow as two or three seconds. Because this homemade photo accessory supports so much of the bottom surface of a camera and lens (rather than balancing all the weight at a single point as a tripod screw does), it's often actually sturdier than a traditional three-legged stand.

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